



NEWS RELEASE

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HOPE CHARTER SCHOOL BREAKS GROUND WITH HELP FROM USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

WINTER GARDEN, FL, June 30, 2004 — “Hope” is turning into reality as the groundbreaking for the new charter school was held today in Winter Garden, Florida. Today’s ceremony brought together city and county officials, the Hope Charter School Board of Directors and representatives from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, as well as students and parents.

Hope Charter School currently operates a charter public elementary and middle school in a leased facility, comprised primarily of portable classrooms. The rural southwest Orange County school provides education opportunities for regular education and autistic students in grades K through 7. The new 13,500 square foot facility will accommodate expansion, the addition of an eighth grade class, and increase in the number of students from 195 to 230.

The \$1,614,000 facility is being funded through a USDA Rural Development loan guarantee of \$1,400,000 along with pledged assets of \$214,000 by Hope Charter School, Inc. “This collaborative effort between the school, county and community demonstrates leadership and vision,” said J. Ronald Whitfield, USDA Rural Development Assistant State Director. “Rural Development is proud to be a part of this new school that will make a noticeable difference to families in rural Orange County.”

In addition to classrooms and administrative support facilities, the ADA accessible building will include a 4,816 square foot breezeway and an exterior covered pavilion. The structure will feature a pre-engineered metal frame system with masonry exterior walls and a metal roof. Interior finishes are composition tile floors, suspended acoustical ceilings and drywall.

USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities and is the lead Federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through Rural Housing Programs, Rural Business-Cooperative Programs and Rural Utilities Programs. Further information on USDA Rural Development can be obtained by contacting any USDA Service Center or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/fl>

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